

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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***For Immediate Release***

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## **MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS DURING MINE SAFETY INVESTIGATION**

Edward E. McNally, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on January 5, 2006, **LARRY G. BUNNER**, age 34, formerly of Jellico, Tennessee, pleaded guilty to two counts in a federal Indictment in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois.

This case arises out the April 9, 2003, death of coal miner Adam Scott and the subsequent investigation into the cause of his death by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Mines and Minerals. BUNNER pleaded guilty to two counts charging him with making material false statements and representations to employees of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MHSA) in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1001 and 2. The Defendant, formerly a foreman/auger operator employed by Midwest Auger Company, pled guilty to allegations that (1) he made a materially false statement to MHSA officials that no one had made any complaints to him about the mechanical condition of a certain piece of equipment used by Midwest Auger Company; and (2) he made a materially false statement to MHSA officials that if he had been told of mechanical problems with said equipment, he would have taken the equipment out of service.

With respect to each of the charges against BUNNER, he faces a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years. Sentencing is scheduled for April 6, 2006, in the United States District Court in Benton, Illinois.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Mines and Minerals.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney George A. Norwood.